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UNCLAS SANTO DOMINGO 005058

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

DEPARTMENT FOR WHA/CAR AND EB/TPP/MTA/;
PLEASE PASS TO USTR/A.DURKIN

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: ECIN ETRD EAGR DR
SUBJECT: GODR: DOMINICANS WERE COOPERATIVE AT CANCUN

¶1. (SBU) GODR INTERLOCUTORS HAVE ASSURED EMBOFFS THAT THEY ENGAGED CONSTRUCTIVELY AND COOPERATIVELY DURING THE SEPTEMBER 10-14 WTO MINISTERIAL. ACCORDING TO SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TELECOMMUNICATIONS (AND PRESIDENT OF INDOTEL), ORLANDO JORGE MERA, AND THE GODR'S CHIEF AGRICULTURAL NEGOTIATOR, OSMAR BENITEZ, THE GODR DID NOT SUPPORT THE POSITION OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES WHOSE DELEGATES HAD WALKED OUT OF THE CONFERENCE.

¶2. (SBU) JORGE EXPLAINED THAT IN RESPONSE TO A REQUEST BY THE UNITED STATES DELEGATION, HE HAD MADE A PLENARY INTERVENTION SUPPORTING THE UNITED STATES ON THE MERIT OF SINGAPORE ISSUES. HE SAID THAT THE DOMINICANS HAD ALSO SHOWN FLEXIBILITY ON NON-AGRICULTURAL MARKET ACCESS, ADDING THAT THE GODR HAD RAISED LEGITIMATE TECHNICAL QUESTIONS ON AGRICULTURAL, BUT HAD NOT IMPEDED DISCUSSIONS. SUB SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE JESUS DE LOS SANTOS TOLD ECONOFF THAT THE DOMINICAN DELEGATION HAD SPOKEN OUT IN FAVOR OF CONTINUING THE NEGOTIATIONS.

¶3. (SBU) ALSO, THE FOREIGN SECRETARIAT'S UNDER SECRETARY FOR TRADE NEGOTIATIONS SANTIAGO TEJADA TOLD ECONOFF SEPTEMBER 17 THAT HE HAD BEEN SURPRISED BY THE ABRUPT ENDING OF THE WTO MINISTERIAL. HE SAID THAT HE HAD EXPECTED NEGOTIATIONS TO CONTINUE UNTIL LATE SEPTEMBER 14 AND THAT AN AGREEMENT WAS WITHIN REACH. TEJADA SAID THAT HE THOUGHT THE CHAIRPERSON HAD ENDED THE MEETING TOO SOON.

¶4. (SBU) AGRICULTURAL NEGOTIATOR OSMAR BENITEZ TOLD DCM SEPTEMBER 17 THAT HE DID NOT VIEW THE MINISTERIAL AS A FAILURE. HE EXPLAINED THAT ALTHOUGH THE OBJECTIVES HAD NOT BEEN MET, THERE WAS SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS TOWARD AGREEMENT THAT COULD SERVE AS THE STARTING POINT DURING THE NEXT WTO MEETINGS. HE ALSO BELIEVED THAT THE USG AND THE GODR SHOULD BE ABLE TO AGREE ON AN APPROACH TO AGRICULTURAL SUBSIDIES, AS LONG AS THERE WOULD BE A SUFFICIENT PHASE-OUT PERIOD FOR THE SUBSIDIES TO BE ENDED.

HERTELL